

II. CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A reticle manipulating device with an at least substantially closed housing for maintaining clean-room conditions inside the housing, which has several functional units, each of which conducts at least one function for the reticle inside the housing, wherein a first functional unit is designed as an input/output station with an opening through which reticles are introduced and discharged in and out of the housing, a manipulating device also arranged inside the housing for transferring the reticles from the input/output station to at least one other functional unit and vice versa, is hereby characterized by an interface of the first functional unit, by means of which the first functional unit can be connected to the reticle manipulating device, the interface having a mechanical and an electrical part forming a detachable mounting and electrical connection of the first functional unit with the housing of the reticle manipulating device.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously Presented) The reticle manipulating device according to claim 1, further characterized in that the input/output station has several input/output units, each of which can be mounted in a detachable manner and has a separate opening for introducing and discharging reticles in and out of the housing, wherein a height of at least one of the several input/output units corresponds substantially to a whole-number multiple of another height of another one of the several input/output units.

4. (Original) A reticle manipulating device system,

comprising a reticle manipulating device according to claim 1 and at least one second functional unit, which is different in its construction from the first functional unit, whereby the first functional unit can be exchanged for the second functional unit.

5. (Previously Presented) The reticle manipulating device system according to claim 4, further characterized by functional units of different functions.

6. (Previously Presented) The reticle manipulating device system according to claim 4, further characterized by several functional units of the same function.

7. (Original) The reticle manipulating device system according to claim 4, further characterized in that a stocking device is provided as a functional unit for the simultaneous intermediate stocking of several reticles inside the housing.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A reticle manipulating device comprising:

a housing capable of having a controlled environment therein;

at least one processing module means connected to the housing and capable of processing a reticle; and

a transport apparatus connected to the housing for transporting the reticle between the at least one module means to another portion of the housing;

wherein the at least one module means is removably connectable to the housing, the at least one module means having an interface adapted for removably coupling the module means to the housing, and ~~characterized in that the~~ at least one module means ~~is~~ being selectable for connection to the housing from a number of different interchangeable modules means each having a different predetermined characteristic and being capable of connection to the housing.

10-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted for cleaning the reticle using at least one of a gas based, a wet based, or electromagnetic radiation based cleaning method.

14. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the housing is capable of holding an inert gas or pressurized gas atmosphere therein.

15. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a detector adapted for detecting at least one of an electric charge on the reticle, or airborne molecular contamination.

16. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a camera for magnified visual inspection of the reticle.

17. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a reader for reading indicia on a pellicle located in the at least one module means.

18. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a detector for detecting flatness of the reticle or of a pellicle located in the at least one module means.

19-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted to store the reticle therein, and the reticle is at least one of an extreme ultra violet bare reticle, a 157 mm reticle, an x-ray reticle, or a SCALPEL reticle.

22. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a processor with programming for performing predictive maintenance, tracking the number of times the reticle has been exposed to light, and characterized in that the programming includes historical models for predicting reticle servicing, cleaning or disposal.

23. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a control for controlling at least one of a temperature or humidity within the at least one module means.

24. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted for preconditioning the reticle prior to transfer of the reticle from the at least one module means to the other portion of the housing.

25. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted for gathering particles from the reticle.

26. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted for buffering one or more reticles.

27. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means has a scribing device for scribing indicia on the reticle.

28. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one module means is adapted for mounting and demounting a pellicle.